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DR. GOODRICH'S
S E R M O N,

AT THE INSTALLATION OF

MR. BOARDMAN.

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THE
JOURNAL

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A
S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE
I N S T A L L A T I O N

REV. MR. BENJAMIN BOARDMAN,
In the Pastoral Office over the second Church of Christ
IN H A R T F O R D,

M A Y 5th, 1784.

BY ELIZUR GOODRICH, D. D.

Pastor of the Church of Christ in *Durham*.

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An Installation Sermon.

EPHESIANS III. 7, 8.

Whereof I was made a Minister according to the gift of the grace of God, given unto me by the effectual working of his power, unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles, the unfearchable riches of CHRIST.

ST. STEPHEN, who was one of the seven deacons and distinguished for his eminent zeal and fortitude, full of faith and power, was the first christian martyr. In the noble and affectionate speech, he made before the rulers of *Israel*, he charged them with disobedience to God, disrespect to the law of *Moses* and the murder of the great MESSIAH. On hearing this, "they were cut to the heart, and gnashed on him with their teeth; but he" unshaken in mind and "full of the HOLY GHOST, looked up steadfastly into Heaven, and said, Behold I see the Heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried with a loud voice, and stopped their ears and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose

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whose name was *Saul*." This is *he*, who is called *Paul*, the great Apostle of the Gentiles. He is first introduced as a cruel persecutor, consenting to the death of the holy martyr : The bloody sentence, he heartily approved ; and would have been filled with joy, had the christian religion been entirely crushed in its infancy.

ANIMATED with successful persecution, and transported with rage at the name of *JESUS*, the furious young zealot "made havock of the church," and not content with vexing the saints, who were at *Jerusalem*, he "persecuted them even to strange cities." With this view he was going to *Damascus*, armed with a murderous commission from the chief priests against the disciples of the *LORD*, when at midday, "a light from Heaven above the brightness of the sun, shining round about" him, and striking him to the earth, he "heard a voice speaking unto" him, "and saying in the *Hebrew* tongue, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me.*" Surprized and amazed he cries out, "Who art thou, *LORD*?" The voice from the most excellent glory replies, "I am *JESUS* of *NAZARETH*, whom thou persecutest. . . Thus stopped in his mad career, and made to feel the power of that name, he had so often blasphemed with trembling and astonishment, he resigns himself into the hands of the injured Saviour, saying, *LORD, "what wilt thou have me to do."*

WITH what joy and admiration do we contemplate the glorious change ? The bloody *Saul*, who was so lately "breathing out threatnings and slaughter against the disciples of the *LORD*," is become, not only a cordial professor, but a zealous preacher of the faith he once persecuted, and glories in nothing so much as in *JESUS CHRIST*, and him crucified. For his sake he is willing to endure all things, hunger, cold and nakedness, flights, affronts and buffetings, stripes and imprisonments.

IN him we behold the liveliest and most finished example of the christian, and the brightest and most accomplished character of an Apostle and minister of *JESUS CHRIST*

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CHRIST. Yet with what self-abasing astonishment does he always speak of himself, as honoured and distinguished especially with the apostolic office to carry the glad tidings of salvation to the *Gentiles*; that they "should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in CHRIST by the gospel."

It was not of his own motion that St. *Paul* "was made a minister" of the gospel, but a gift unsought and freely conferred. It was not on account of any worthiness in him, but "according to the gift of the grace of God, given" to him; not in a common, but in a very extraordinary manner by the "effectual working of" divine "power," which wrought in him so great and glorious a change, and conferred on him those high accomplishments which qualified him for that holy and honourable office. The great head of the church did not send forth his servants unfurnished for the work unto which he appointed them. The twelve Apostles were long under the immediate instruction of CHRIST himself; and yet, after his resurrection were commanded to tarry at *Jerusalem*, until they were "endued with power from on high." And what, though they did not pass through a course of study and literature to prepare them for the ministry, yet this want was more than supplied by those gifts of the Holy GHOST, which enabled them to speak with tongues, and to be infallible guides to men in the way of salvation. It is most evident they were qualified and authorised for their work. When bold invaders of the ministerial office would justify themselves for want of furniture and deny the necessity of study and of application to ordinary means by the apostolic example, let them produce the like credentials and evidence of their mission, as the Apostles gave.

THE honour of being made a minister of the gospel, the apostle Paul ascribes to the astonishing grace of the great God. "Unto me who am less than the least of all saints"---He seems not to know how to speak of himself

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self in terms of sufficient abasement, and useth a most diminutive expression, "less than the least." Nor does he speak this with an hypocritical design that others should admire and praise him the more, but because he was once "a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious." "Unto me, is this grace given that I should preach the unsearchable riches of CHRIST." The apostolic office and ministerial character, with all their divine qualifications are fitly called *grace*, not only as freely given, but as distinguishing some from others. They are not common to all the saints, but peculiar to those, whose business it is to open the treasures of the divine IMMANUEL, and to publish the glad tidings of the gospel.

AND especially the apostle esteemed it an high honour that he was chosen to carry the gospel to the Gentiles; and to "preach among" them "the unsearchable riches of CHRIST." It had been long expected by the Jews, that in the days of the MESSIAH, the Gentiles should be added to the church; but that the Gentiles should be heirs of the same inheritance, and partakers of the same promises, was a "mystery, which had been hidden from ages and generations." This the Jews never thought of, but rather that the Gentiles would be their slaves; much less had they any imagination, that the middle wall of ceremonies should be broken down, and the full privileges of the people of God be conferred on the Gentiles, without a submission to the law of Moses. This was matter of amazement to the Jewish believers when they first heard it, and of this the apostle speaks as an astonishing instance of grace to the Gentile world.

IN this view of our text, our minds might be lead to many pleasing and adoring contemplations of the wonders of divine grace in our redemption by JESUS CHRIST, and the ways, in which it has been published through successive ages to mankind, with the brighter glories, which shone forth when the joyful light arose on the nations, and the day spring from on high visited those, that
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had long lain under the darkness of heathen ignorance and idolatry: But the time allowed me on the present occasion will not admit of such enlargement.

I shall attempt to represent, what the unsearchable riches of CHRIST are---what it is to preach them---and the honour and duty of the ministers of the gospel, in imitation of the great apostle of the Gentiles, to preach them with all faithfulness and sincerity.

I. I am to represent the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.

THE *riches* of CHRIST, with all the treasures of divine love, grace and mercy contained in the counsels of Heaven respecting the salvation of men, are to be found in his gospel. *These* are not like the riches of this world, gold and silver and precious stones, houses and lands, sheep and oxen, which possessed in abundance make men rich on earth; and the want of them in any great degree makes them poor. These riches, though possessed in the greatest plenty, are only valuable to the purposes of a short and earthly life. But the riches of CHRIST make rich toward God, and rich for eternity.

WOULD we know what these riches of CHRIST are, we must study the system of divine revelation, and there contemplate the glories of his person and purchase---the treasures of his spirit and grace---the majesty of his high dominion, and the equity and righteousness of his universal rule and government, while we bow before the Father of mercies with reverence and gratitude for the unspeakable gift of his only begotten Son, and the manifestations made through him for the salvation of a fallen world, to "the praise of the glory of his grace."

JESUS our LORD is a most wonderful person, "God over all blessed forevermore, who was made flesh and dwelt among men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief," two distinct natures and one person forever.

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He obeyed the law of God in the sinners room, as well as revealed the Father's grace, and while he brought in an everlasting righteousness; he died on the cross for the sin's of men. When laid in the grave, he arose from the dead, and was "declared to be the Son of God with power." And "when he ascended he gave gifts unto men," and now sits enthroned in glory "on the right hand of the majesty on high," invested with universal dominion, and will come hereafter in his own and the Father's glory, and all the holy angels with him to judge the world and distribute the eternal rewards of his kingdom.

THE *riches* of his purchase may be summarily comprised in "wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption," all which he is of God made unto the heirs of salvation. *These* are derived from him as our redeemer in the execution of his high offices of prophet, priest and king, and contain all those blessings and privileges, faith and holiness, grace, peace and comfort, which christians need in this world, and salvation with eternal glory at his appearing and kingdom.

THE *treasures* of his SPIRIT, relate to the confirmation of the gospel in the world, and the application of the work of redemption to the souls of men. The HOLY SPIRIT is that divine and almighty AGENT, the third person in the adorable TRINITY, who by signs and wonders gave at first a public attestation to the gospel, and by communicating miraculous powers and spiritual gifts, qualified the apostles and their assistants to publish it among the nations; at the same time and ever since accompanying it with an inward and sovereign efficacy for the accomplishment of the purposes of divine grace, in bringing the elect to the obedience of faith and making them meet for glory.

THERE are also the majesty of his high dominion, and the equity and righteousness of his universal government. These are riches, that belong to the only begotten Son of
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of GOD. By nature he is LORD of all worlds, and of all creatures in them ; and as mediator " all power in Heaven and earth is given" unto him. " The earth is" his " and the fulness thereof ; the world and all that dwell therein : For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. He is high above all nations : He hath prepared his throne in the Heavens, and his glory is above the Heavens." His laws are right, his judgments just, and the whole administration of his kingdom glorious in the righteousness, peace and holiness of his subjects, while it shall issue in the utter ruin and confusion of all that oppose his reign. Therefore " kiss the Son, lest he be angry, and ye perish in the way ; for in a little while his anger shall be enkindled : Blessed are all they that put their trust in him."

THESE are some of the treasures of CHRIST, who in the constitution of his person as Mediator, with all the blessings that flow from him as the head of the redeemed, is the ineffable contrivance of the Father's wisdom and love, and his gift to a ruined world, " that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life."

WITH pleasing wonder and joy we might meditate on the astonishing plan of moral government over fallen man, in the hands of the great MESSIAH.---We might trace it up to its original source and fountain, the infinite benevolence and grace of Deity toward erring man.---We might consider the revealed fitness of the scheme of mediation, and the wisdom of the vicarious righteousness and atonement of the Redeemer, to secure the honour of the divine government, and to illustrate that grace, which " reigns through righteousness unto eternal life, by JESUS CHRIST."---We might shew, how that faith, by which we become interested in these blessings, and that holiness, without which no man shall see the LORD, spring from the riches of CHRIST, and are so far from being derogatory to the Father's grace, or the redemption of the Son,
that

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that they are divinely suited to give honour to both. Many other things might be brought up to view as tending to illustrate the riches of CHRIST; but I forbear, as designing only a brief sketch of these treasures of the Redeemer, which on account of the great variety and abundance of them, and their transcendent excellency and preciousness, may well be called riches. They "cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx or the sapphire: The gold and chrystal cannot equal them, and the change of them shall not be for jewels of fine gold; for the price of them is above rubies, and all the things which may be desired are not to be compared with them."

AND these riches of CHRIST are *unsearchable*; not because we may not search into them, but because after all our most serious search, we shall never arrive at the full knowledge of them. For in these riches of CHRIST, are heights and depths, and lengths and breadths, that neither men nor angels can understand and comprehend. They will be the subject of the most exalted contemplations of all the myriads of bright intelligences, that shall inhabit the heavenly worlds through endless ages; who nevertheless in respect of these, as of all other glories of the Deity, shall with profound reverence cry out, "who can by searching find out God? Who can find out the Almighty unto perfection?" And however some may think they shall compass all knowledge at once in the beatific vision of God, yet may we not rather conclude, that the more vast and boundless the knowledge of saints or angels may be at any period of their future glory, the more boundless and immense will the distance appear between them, and the amazing height of JEHOVAH's throne. Christians, how rich---immensely rich are you in CHRIST. "Therefore let no man glory in men; for all things are yours: whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours and ye are CHRIST's, and CHRIST is God's." II.

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II. I am to consider what it is to preach the unfearchable riches of CHRIST.

It is well known that the Greek noun *Euangelion* which we translate *gospel*, i. e. either GOD's word, or a good word, signifies *glad tidings* or a joyful message. Hence the imitative verb, which in the text is rendered to *preach*, signifies to *publish*, *declare*, or *bring glad tidings*, or a good and joyful message. So the angels, who published the Saviour's birth to the shepherds, addressed them with these gracious words. "Fear not, for behold, I bring you glad tidings of great joy, which shall be to you and all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is CHRIST the LORD." The news of a Saviour is the best message that was ever published in this fallen world, and may emphatically be called the *gospel*, and contains all the unfearchable riches of CHRIST and his redemption,---grace here and glory hereafter.

To preach these unfearchable riches of CHRIST, is to exhibit him to view as he is exhibited in the gospel, in his personal glories and mediatorial fulness, in all his grace and salvation, rule and government, and the whole administration of his kingdom in this world and that which is to come, in such a manner as may have the most apt tendency to bring sinners home to GOD, through the Mediator by a sincere repentance, and to build up saints in holiness and comfort through faith unto salvation.

JESUS CHRIST, therefore, as the new and living way to the Father, should be the great subject of our discourses: For to him all the lines of revelation refer, and in him they meet as their divine center. Hence to preach CHRIST, will comprehend a declaring the whole counsel of GOD, and lead the gospel minister to open the whole scheme of christianity, and to set every part in a just, clear and convincing light, as he would be "pure from the blood of all men." Such preaching is of great extent:
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The whole system of divine revelation comes within the compass of it. There is no doctrine, ordinance, example, precept, promise or threatening contained in the book of God, but what has its proper place in the plan of our redemption by JESUS CHRIST, who will fulfil all the designs of his Father's grace in bringing many sons to glory, and in making known his power and justice in the everlasting destruction of all who neglect the great salvation, and will not obey the gospel.

THESE things kept in view will lead the preacher to divide the word of truth aright. He will have no disposition to waste his time about needless questions, ministering strife rather than godly edifying. He will even beware lest he bestow too great pains upon the circumstantial appendages of religion : But he will dwell on those things, which have a near and close connection with the eternal salvation of his hearers. He will represent to them the apostacy of man from GOD---urge them to a consideration of their ruined and wretched state---open to their view the method of recovery through a glorious Saviour revealed in the gospel---beseech them in CHRIST's stead to be reconciled to GOD, and explain to them how "the grace of GOD, which bringeth salvation, teacheth to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously and godly in the world."

AND would the christian preacher awaken secure and thoughtless sinners ? Let him not only represent the purity and extent of the divine law and its eternal curse ; but let him also preach the glories of CHRIST's power, and open the treasures of his wrath against the impenitent, unbelieving and ungodly. "Knowing the terrors of the LORD, we persuade men."--Would he guide the awakened soul, whose guilt is become an intolerable burden, and makes him cry out in anguish, "What shall I do to be saved ?" Let him distinctly explain to him the evil of sin, the necessity of regeneration, and the way of salvation by faith in CHRIST ; and let him preach the
riches

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riches of the Saviour in his person, offices and works, in his grace, merit and righteousness, in his willingness and power to save. This may excite repentance, encourage access to God by prayer, ingenerate faith and hope, and through the power of sovereign grace lead to comfort and peace.---Would he animate the christian, and arm him with patience in the race of piety and virtue? Let him represent on the one hand the shame and disgrace of falling short, and on the other the glorious hope and prospect of his calling, the aids of the good spirit of God, and the mighty supports of the divine promises; especially let him bring into view the second and illustrious appearing of the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who will openly approve and reward the faith, the piety and virtue of his humble followers; and when all the kingdoms of this world shall sink into one universal wreck, will make them partakers of the honours and glories of a kingdom which cannot be moved.

THUS let the preacher study the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, and learn from those treasures to dispense counsels, warnings, exhortations and comforts to every one's state and wants, that the understanding may be enlightened,--the judgment freed from error--the conscience awakened---the heart changed---the life reformed---men conducted in the paths of happiness and peace---death disarmed of its sting, and christians prepared to praise the LORD with their dying breath and to leave the world rejoicing.

III. I am to represent the sacred obligations which lie on ministers of the gospel to preach the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.

HERE I shall only mention such motives and arguments to faithfulness as are suggested in our text,---the grace and privilege conferred on them---the honour of CHRIST whose glories are published, and the end of preaching, which in subserviency to the glory of GOD, is "that the world might be saved."

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WHOEVER enters on this work with worthy principles, and feels his heart burn with love to the LORD JESUS CHRIST and the souls of men,---whoever has just conceptions of that glorious master in whose service he engages,---whoever has studied the nature and the duties of the ministerial office, and has been made sensible of his own unworthiness,---whoever has contemplated the exalted perfections of JEHOVAH, and the distance---the amazing distance between a sinful worm of the dust and HIM, who sits enthroned in glory, HEAD over all things to the church, with astonishment---with adoring gratitude and humility will adopt the words of the apostle Paul in our text, "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints is this grace given that I shall preach among" my fellow mortals "the unfearchable riches of CHRIST." A sense of unworthiness and gratitude for this honour, will forcibly oblige ministers to faithfulness. It was "the favor of the knowledge of CHRIST," the apostle manifested in every place, "We preach" say they "not ourselves, but CHRIST JESUS the LORD."

THE honour of CHRIST, also, requires that ministers be faithful in preaching his unfearchable riches. He hath put honour on them, and gratitude obliges them in the exercise of their ministry to endeavour the advancement of his honour and glory. And how can they do this, if they neglect to preach and make known his unfearchable riches? If they do not, will he not treat them as those, who have betrayed his cause and joined with his enemies?

MANY are dishonouring the divine IMMANUEL, and daily attempting to rob him of the glories of his person, and the riches of his grace and dominion.---Some degrade him to the rank of creatures, which his hand has made; others deny the riches of his mediation and purchase, and rest on works in opposition to his complete atonement and perfect righteousness.---Some reproach his sovereign power and mercy in the gift of the spirit, and set up the idol

idol of human self-sufficiency in opposition to his supernatural and almighty grace in the regeneration of sinners, and the preparation of saints for glory ; others detract from his supreme wisdom and goodness in the instituted means of faith and conversion, denying that there is any encouragement to wait at wisdom's gate, and watch at the posts of her doors, though sinners are so affectionately invited to " seek the LORD, while he may be found and to call upon him while he is near."--Many attempt to rob him of the riches of his word and gospel, as though it were not a complete and perfect rule : Some, by teaching for doctrines, the commandments of men, and by introducing into his worship rules and ceremonies he never ordained ; others, by following the fancies of their own minds, and, perhaps, the impulses of a malignant spirit, as being certain directions from Heaven, while they disregard what the spirit saith to the churches in that book, which is designed to be the infallible guide of christians.---Some represent him as the author of confusion, by giving and assuming the sacred office of his house without paying any regard to the orders he established when he ascended on high, and the scriptural and apostolic examples of introducing qualified and approved men into the ministry, by the laying on of the hands of the presbytery.---Many represent him as a minister of sin : Some, by imputing to the gospel, not only the most licentious, but even the most impious and blasphemous doctrines, tending to destroy all the foundations of religion and virtue ; others, by making void the law as a rule of obedience to believers, and by denying real sanctification to be the grand evidence and preparative for the joys of Heaven.---Some are attempting to rob him of the awful glories of his righteous vengeance in the everlasting damnation of the ungodly, and by softening the horror or removing the endless duration of future torments, through a treacherous compassion, lull sinners into the flames of an eternal hell, whence there is no redemption ; others at once reject the gospel, and treat the divine Saviour as an

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impostor, while multitudes are practically denying his power, justice and holiness by a wicked, ungodly and impenitent life.

WHILE so many are dishonouring CHRIST, and endeavouring to deprive him of the glories of his person and kingdom, is it not fit that those, on whom he hath bestowed the gift and grace of the ministry and intrusted with his cause, should attempt to vindicate his injured honour? and the more others are sacrilegiously robbing him of his divine graces, shall they not the more vigourously defend and preach his unsearchable riches, lest they also be found guilty of betraying his cause?

ESPECIALLY when the great end of their ministry, in subserviency to the glory of GOD, is the salvation of men. The constitution of the person of CHRIST, and the salvation of a fallen world by him, is the most wonderful contrivance of the wisdom of GOD. In it, all the properties of the divine nature and the honour of the divine government are deeply concerned. It is designed to give the brightest display of the infinite glories of GOD's wisdom and goodness, mercy, love and grace: It secures the honour of his holiness, truth and justice; and is suited to exalt the divine character and humble the proud sinner, and yet opens a way for his recovery and salvation.

AND if the salvation of precious souls to the praise of the glory of GOD's grace, in a way, not only consistent with the holiness and justice of his nature and government, but in which they are gloriously manifested, be the great end of the gospel, and of the ministry of reconciliation, can we hesitate a moment what kind of preaching has the most direct, powerful and universal tendency to accomplish the merciful design? *That*, which instead of dwelling on the riches of the Redeemer, seems to pass over in silence the need we stand in of salvation by him? Or *that*, which at once opens to the sinners view his extremely

tremely wretched, polluted and guilty state, and displays the glories of CHRIST's person, the fulness and sufficiency of his redemption, and the greatness of his love and condescension; and at the same time offers salvation to every perishing sinner, who hears the gracious message and urges all the arguments of terrour as well as of hope, with which CHRIST has furnished his servants, to persuade, and even compel sinners to obey the gospel, and to be reconciled to God? And whence shall the christian be furnished with effectual means, motives and helps of the divine life, but from the serious contemplation and lively faith of those riches of CHRIST, in a view of which he was first converted? How then shall the preacher better assist the holiness, comfort and joy of believers, than by setting forth the same riches in their true connexion with all the duties, promises and institutions of the gospel? Is not this preaching best calculated to answer the end of the ministry? And shall not those, who are honoured with this grace abound in it, humbly looking to their divine master to give efficacy and success to their labours, as knowing though Paul plant and Apollos water, yet God only giveth the increase?

I have finished what I first proposed, and shall only add some considerations taken from the subject and the occasion, on which we are assembled in the house of God with this church and congregation. And,

I. THE subject which has been before us, is of great and universal concern. The riches of CHRIST are of infinite worth, and bespeak the attention of all, to whom the gospel is published. But especially it concerns us, *my brethren*, whose business it is to preach them to our fellow men, to make them our constant study and meditation, and that we feel their divine power in our own hearts, and shew forth a favor of the knowledge of CHRIST, in our lives as well as our preaching.

If we look to the apostle Paul, in all his addresses he was certainly in earnest: He preached as one who had a deep

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deep sense of the worth of his own soul, and the souls of them who heard him. Can we doubt what were his sentiments of the perishing state of human nature under the ruins of sin? Or how high and exalted were his thoughts of the glorious and amazing work of God manifested in the flesh? With what unwearied and vigorous application does he pursue his work amidst all trials and oppositions, ever realizing the power, wisdom, grace and faithfulness of CHRIST, and esteeming it his honour to preach his unsearchable riches, and promote the everlasting salvation of men? Such should be our sentiments, such our principles, such our dispositions who have undertaken this sacred work. Well may the bright example of the apostle serve to admonish and humble us, and to rouse and stimulate us to the duties of our office. And, methinks, we need only keep in view the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, and we shall feel an inexpressible obligation to diligence and faithfulness in the whole of our work, and to dwell much on the glories of the Redeemer in our preaching, and on those great doctrines of the gospel, which are derived from and stand in the closest connexion with his unsearchable riches: For these are the doctrines, which give glory to God, and bring salvation to men. "By grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God."

HAVE we to lament that the treasures of divine mercy are so much despised, and to take up the mournful complaint of the prophet, "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?" Let us not sink under the discouragement, but deeply humble ourselves for all our lukewarmness in the service of our master, and looking to him, whose it is to open the heart, be more earnest and zealous in preaching the terrors of CHRIST's power and the glories of his grace.

ARE many ready to despise us, and vilify the office itself? Let us not think to maintain respect by high notions of power and ministerial prerogative, but by diligence and faithfulness in our office, and by meekness, patience

patience and kindness towards all men; yet so, that we descend to no mean or sinful compliances, nor crouch to the wicked and unreasonable humours of any, whether in high or low station, to obtain their favour. We may, as far as may be done with a good conscience, "become all things to all men," that we may gain some: We may wave our personal rights, and let insults and reproaches pass unnoticed, when it can be done without meanness and indignity: We may study the passions, the temper and disposition of our hearers, and choose our words acceptable to them, provided they be words of truth and soberness, and that we do not shun "to declare the whole counsel of God." But whether they will hear or forbear, the message, which God hath put into our mouth, we must deliver with all faithfulness and sincerity; so we shall be "pure from the blood of all men."

ESPECIALLY, *my brethren*, while we preach the unsearchable riches of CHRIST, and open to others the way of salvation, let us take care that we be acquainted with it ourselves. Do we preach salvation from sin to our people, and unfold the glories of CHRIST'S holiness and justice, as well as of his grace and redemption: And shall any of us be the servant of unrighteousness, and contradict by his life what he preacheth with his mouth? A man of GOD! a preacher of righteousness! and yet profane, proud, covetous, contentious, intemperate, idle, unfaithful! How awful and glaring the absurdity? Let each of us then, take heed to himself that he be not a stranger to the effectual working of that gospel which he preacheth, or guilty of those sins he daily condemns and warns others to turn from. On the contrary, while we maintain the life of grace in our hearts, let us labour after an exemplary holiness of conversation. This will most effectually recommend our ministry and gain the attention of our hearers.

SOLEMN is the work we have undertaken, and strict the bonds we are under to fulfil it! Delightful and pleasing

is the office ; attended indeed with difficulties and dangers, cares and pains, tears and watchings, yet sweet are its comforts, and mighty are its supports ! Awful indeed on the one hand to be charged with the blood of souls ; yet on the other, glorious the reward, which is laid up in store for those whom the LORD shall approve at his appearance and kingdom, a crown of righteousness which fadeth not away. Let us, *my brethren*, exhort and comfort one another with these things.

2. WE learn from our subject the distinguishing privileges and honours of a people, who have the unsearchable riches of CHRIST preached among them ; and with what gladness they should receive and entertain the ministers of the gospel.

THE rich and distinguishing privileges of the Jewish church chiefly consisted in this, "that unto them were committed the oracles of God." Therefore we read in the book of *Psalms*, "Beautiful for situation is mount Zion, the joy of the whole earth." For "In Judah GOD is known ;---His name is great in Israel. In Salem also is his tabernacle, and his dwelling place in Zion." But how much more rich and distinguishing are the privileges of the christian church ; all which may be summarily comprised in the clearer revelation of the unsearchable riches of CHRIST. Here are brighter discoveries of the person and salvation of the great Redeemer, than could be made under the typical dispensation of Moses. These discoveries were not confined to one nation, but published in the world without distinction, that even the Gentiles, who "were without CHRIST, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world," might "be fellow heirs" with the Jewish believers, "and of the same body and partakers of his promise by the gospel."

THE calling of the Gentiles into the church of God,
in

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in a way so different from what had been expected, was at first beheld with wonder by the Jewish christians, and is spoken of by St. Paul in the context as a mystery, "which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men." And certainly the conversion of the Gentiles, and the granting unto them repentance unto life, in all its circumstances and attending glories, with that liberty it brings to the church, is a subject of the highest admiration and tends to illustrate the unfathomable riches of CHRIST. We, who live in this age, are greatly concerned in it; not only as this dispensation of grace is revealed unto us, but in particular as we are a part of the nations, who in time past were foreigners to God's Church and lived in gross idolatry, but are now enlightened with the everlasting gospel, and all the privileges of it, for which we have reason forever to bless God.

THE gospel was at first carried to the nations while they were in ignorance of God: He "was found of them that sought" him "not: He was made manifest unto them that asked not after" him. But unto us it comes as a divine and gracious inheritance, in fulfilment of that antient promise made to the *Messiah*, "A seed shall serve him; it shall be accounted to the LORD for a generation. They shall come and declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born that he hath done this." And in the same way in which we have received these gracious privileges of the gospel from our fathers, we are to transmit them to our children. For "the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children."

FOR the accomplishment of these purposes of divine wisdom and love toward the church, and to perpetuate in it the knowledge of salvation, the gospel ministry is appointed by God, and blessed with the presence of CHRIST, according to his gracious promise to his apostles. "Lo I am with

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with you alway even unto the end of the world." This promise of our divine Redeemer shews that a gospel ministry is a standing ordinance in the church, and that it was not limited to the apostles in their extraordinary character, in which they have properly no successors. Pastors and teachers, as well as apostles, prophets and evangelists are the gifts of our ascended LORD, and are derived from his love to the church. He hath appointed their office and employment, and the method of their introduction into the sacred business : From him they derive their gifts and furniture, their encouragements and helps, their prospects and success : His gospel with all his unsearchable riches they are to preach ; and to him they stand accountable for their ministry.

IN this view, they are to be received as the ambassadors of CHRIST, and to be treated according to the dignity of their office. The truths, they deliver should be realized as the word of GOD, and worthy of the same reverence and obedience as if pronounced by his own awful voice. It is only when the gospel is received, not as the word of man, but as the word of GOD, that it hath an effectual operation in the heart, and becomes life to the soul through faith. Ministers are in themselves guilty and polluted creatures, and dependant for salvation on the same sovereign grace of GOD they preach to others. Their honour is not therefore derived from themselves, but from the employment with which they are entrusted, and a diligent and faithful discharge of the duties of their office. While therefore they are doing the work of the LORD, it becomes a people unto whom they are sent, to acknowledge them in their character as the ambassadors of CHRIST, to treat them in the most tender and respectful manner, and to give a constant attendance and the most strict regard to all their regular administrations. This is an apostolic injunction to the churches, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves : for they watch for your souls, as those that must give an account ; that they may do it with joy and not with grief."

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3. THE subject of my discourse and the solemn and important occasion on which we are assembled, may lead us to rejoice with this people on the pleasing prospect with which, after so many days of darkness and bereavement, the great King and Head of the church is pleased to visit them.

THIS daughter of Zion hath been covered with a cloud, and for a number of years hath sitten in a condition of deep mourning and sorrow. Long had she shone in the beautiful robes of gospel order, peace and love under the ministry of her former teachers, and especially of her late affectionate and faithful pastor, whose praise is still in the churches. Since his removal by death, her beauty has been defaced, and seemed to be departing from her. GOD hath given her "the bread of adversity, and the water of affliction." Yet while the great Shepherd of Israel hath seemed to hide his face from this flock, his eye hath nevertheless watched over them, and his tender love and care hath been manifested in their various difficulties. He hath preserved them from being scattered ;---He hath fortified them with persevering endeavours for the resettlement of the gospel ministry ;---He hath supported them under their several disappointments ;---He hath not suffered such a spirit of discord to enter as to prevent their continued applications, and in his own time he hath united their hearts in the most unanimous choice, and given them a pastor to feed them with knowledge and understanding, to break to them the bread of life, and to preach among them the unsearchable riches of CHRIST.

THIS peaceful settlement of the gospel ministry, which we are now solemnizing before GOD, gives peculiar pleasure to the friends of Zion, who rejoice with this church and society in all their harmonious transactions, and wish them a blessing in the house of the LORD. "Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."

SWEET are the blessings of christian love and communion

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nion! Sweet are the affectionate joys derived from an endearing friendship between a minister and the people of his charge! *He* bears them continually on his heart before God, and with ardent benevolence pursues their best and everlasting interests. He has no greater pleasure than when he beholds them walking in the truth, abounding in love, and bringing forth the fruits of righteousness and peace. *They* revere him in his office---treat him with respect and tenderness in his person and character---endeavour to render his life easy and comfortable---attend with constancy on his ministrations--hearken to his counsels---and keep in view the strict account, which they as well as he must give at the appearing of JESUS CHRIST.

SUCH are the blessings and the joys, which I sincerely wish may greatly abound among this people; and with an encouraging hope that the great King and Head of the church is here pouring them out, I will close this discourse with an address to my reverend and dear brother, who is now entering into this part of his LORD's vineyard, and to the church and congregation under his pastoral care and charge.

Reverend and dear Sir, and much respected brethren and friends.

I am persuaded, that on this occasion your hearts are filled with gratitude and praise to the great Redeemer and King of Zion for the tokens of his tender love and kindness, and that with adoring admiration you trace the steps of his providence, which have prepared the way, opened the door, and led you into your present endearing relation. This day may unfold to your silent meditations, the reasons of those dark and mysterious dispensations, through which you have passed. May they be improved for your greater comfort and joy, and be a means of encreasing your thankfulness, and quickening you to every good word and work.

I trust you have well considered the solemn and important meaning of presenting yourselves before the LORD this day. It is not for the purpose of ordination, as you, Rev. Sir, are already invested with regular authority to execute all the powers of the christian ministry, when and wheresoever you are called of God; but being now to be made an overseer of this flock, according to their choice and your consent, it is meet it should be done in a public and solemn manner with approbation of neighbouring elders and by prayer for a blessing to attend your ministry. The language therefore of this solemnity is, that presenting yourselves before the LORD you do publicly avouch your more private transactions, and call God, angels and men to witness that you have and do enter into covenant to be and walk together in the relation of a christian pastor and flock, and that you bind yourselves to perform respectively the duties that are derived from it so long as it shall please God to continue you in this connexion. We, who are ministers of the gospel, present on your invitation, having examined and approved your proceedings, have only to recommend you to the grace of God, and exhort you to walk together in love and peace for your mutual edification, and that you may be to each other a crown and joy in the day of our LORD JESUS CHRIST.

You, Sir, are no novice in the ministry. You have studied the duties of the office---felt its burdens---experienced its cares, and been acquainted with its tears and watchings. And no doubt you have often cried out, "Who is sufficient for these things?" In your trials, we trust, you have known to whom you were to apply for strength, and found his grace sufficient for you.

You have now entered into a new field of labour. Here you are to employ your time and talents in preaching the unfathomable riches of CHRIST, and in building up this church in peace and gospel order. You will study to cultivate and increase that friendship,
which

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which now subsists between you and this people, that you may be under the best advantages of being useful among them, and extensively in the churches. Where love is wanting, either on the speakers tongue or in the hearers ear, they will be apt to mistake each other: Hence arise groundless jealousies and complaints, which proceed to hard usage and bitter contentions, until life becomes so uncomfortable to a minister, and the prospect of usefulness so small, that a separation is the issue, and the people are left as sheep without a shepherd. Sometimes this is occasioned by a minister's own imprudence; at other times, the most faithful messengers of CHRIST, have met with such cruel treatment from an ungrateful people, that the words of our LORD spoken to the first preachers of the gospel, may seem directed to them, "When they persecute you in one city, flee ye to another." But wherever they go, they have to encounter the lusts and passions of men; and the weakness of some and the wickedness of others will bring them much trouble. This is an unjust and selfish world; trials therefore, we may expect in the ministerial and christian warfare; nor shall we find an end of them till death shuts up the scene. But none of these things should discourage us, neither should we count our lives dear unto ourselves, provided we may finish our course with joy, and the ministry which we have received of the LORD, to testify the gospel of the grace of God,

LET me only add my sincere and devout wish that GOD would direct your way unto this people in the fulness of the blessings of the gospel of CHRIST, rendering your ministry peaceful, happy and successful among them, and that you may finally meet with the reward of a faithful servant.

AND my dear brethren of this church and society, let the divine principle of love animate your whole conduct toward your pastor and toward each other. This will encourage his heart and strengthen his hands, and
make

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make you appear a beautiful and glorious church, while you are found in your several places and carefully perform your respective duties. *He* will break to you the bread of life, and preach among you the unfearchable riches of CHRIST. *You*, will carefully attend and improve the privileges of the sanctuary, and the riches of CHRIST will be to you riches of grace and riches of glory. The ways of Zion will no longer mourn, because none come to her solemn feasts. You will be pressing into the kingdom of God, and filling up the room there is still in the church of CHRIST on earth, and great will be your peace and the peace of your children. You will work unblamably and fruitfully in the world, holding forth the word of truth, glorifying the LORD JESUS by the profession of his name, and keeping his testimony to the end, till he receive you to all the glories and joys of his eternal kingdom.

“ Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our LORD JESUS CHRIST, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through JESUS CHRIST, to whom be glory forever and ever. AMEN.”

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make you a beautiful and glorious church while
 you are found in your lowly places and carefully pre-
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 to be found in the midst of the unsearchable
 riches of Christ. You will carefully attend and im-
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 forth the word of truth, glorifying the Father Jesus by
 the profession of his name, and keeping his testimony to
 the end, till he receive you to all the glories and joys of
 eternal kingdom.

"Now the God of Israel, who brought again from
 the land of the Assyrians, that our Shepherd
 the Lord, through the power of the everlasting cove-
 nant, brought you out of the land of Egypt, to this day
 bring you out of the land of the living, that you may
 be found in the midst of the unsearchable riches of
 Christ, to whom be glory forever."

